

College Board Public Comments for Interim Charge #1

The College Board appreciates the opportunity to provide information on Interim Charge #1 related to the dual credit study. We are a mission-driven non-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity and a membership association made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading education institutions.

Dual credit programs and Advanced Placement Program (AP) share the same goal of delivering opportunities for students to get a head start on their college education. For more than 60 years, the AP Program has represented a truly collaborative partnership between higher education and secondary school educators. Research consistently demonstrates that students who take AP Exams have numerous beneficial outcomes compared to similar students who have not had the same experience. These outcomes benefit students, universities, state taxpayers, and the economic engine for the state.

As such, our recommendations support best practices for students to earn college credit while in high school and ways to improve student access to courses that reflect authentic, college-level rigor. They include:

1. Continuous evaluation of college credit in high school programs.
2. Ensuring universal support for all college credit in high school programs including AP.
3. Supporting continued funding for the Texas AP Incentive Program.

Recommendation #1: Continuous Evaluation of College Credit in High School Programs

Over the past six decades, opportunities for high school students to earn college credit have multiplied. From early career and technical education offerings to AP to different models of dual credit and early college high schools, these programs now serve millions of students each year.

More recently, surging demand from students, high schools, postsecondary institutions, and state policymakers has driven explosive growth in college credit in high school opportunities. Texas is leading other states in evaluating course access, participation, and outcomes of these programs. **To ensure quality, College Board recommends that Texas continues to monitor and pursue more rigorous research, where warranted, to ensure that each of these programs are academically sound and that they place students on a path to college and career success.**

The College Board continuously evaluates and researches our 38 AP courses and exams to ensure they align with college level learning, and that students receive the credit they have earned and succeed in subsequent college coursework. Students who take AP Exams are more likely to enroll in college,¹ stay in college, do well in their classes,² and graduate in four years.³

Recently, the College Board evaluated how AP Exam participation influences income earnings in Texas. On average, Texas AP students earn \$6,200 to \$11,900 more per year in their early-30s compared to individuals with similar demographic characteristics, academic preparation, and access to AP who did not take AP Exams.

¹ Chajewski, M., Mattern, K. D., & Shaw, E. J. (2011). Examining the role of Advanced Placement® exam participation in four-year college enrollment. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 30, 16–27.

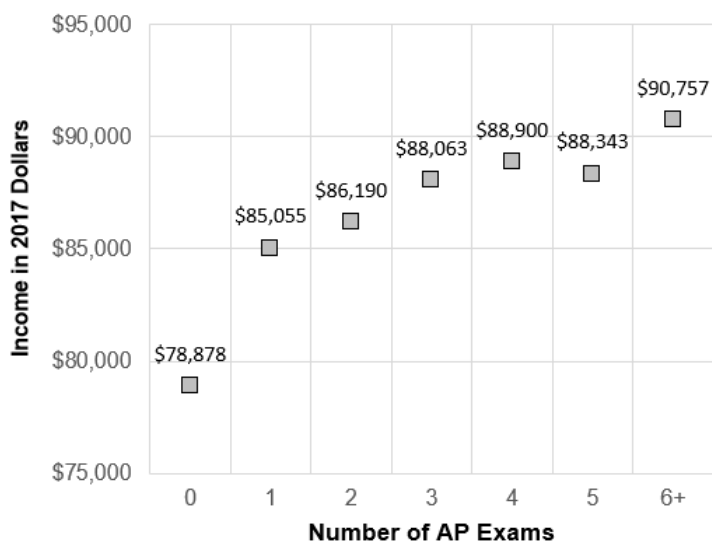
² Mattern, K. D., Shaw, E. J., & Xiong, X. (2009). *The relationship between AP® Exam performance and college outcomes* (College Board Research Report 2009-4). New York: The College Board. Patterson, B. F., Packman

³ Mattern, K. D., Shaw, E. J., & Xiong, X. (2009). *The relationship between AP® Exam performance and college outcomes* (College Board Research Report 2009-4). New York: The College Board. Mattern, K. D., Marini, J. M., & Shaw, E. J. (2013). *Are AP students more likely to graduate from college on time?* (College Board Research Report 2013-5). New York: The College Board.

- AP students experience higher early-career incomes compared to non-AP students with similar demographic characteristics, academic preparation, and access to AP.
- Early-career incomes are predicted to rise with additional AP Exams.

Predicted Income Gains from AP Participation

Figure 1 (AP and Estimated Early-Career Income in Texas) shows the predicted annual incomes of Texans in their early-30s based on the number of AP Exams they took during high school, including students who did and did not earn scores of 3, 4, or 5 on those Exams. The largest increase in predicted income—from \$78,878 to \$85,055 (or about \$6,200)—is associated with students taking their first AP Exam and represents a 7.8% increase in predicted early-career income per year. Students taking six or more exams earn about \$11,900 more than similar students who took no AP Exams.⁴



Notes: Based on Texans in the 2004 high school graduating class with controls for PSAT/NMSQT scores, high school AP offerings, and student demographics. The sample comprises approximately 61% of students in the 2004 high school graduation cohort in the state.

We also encourage the Committee to also consider the Foundation for Excellence in Education's policy guide to ensure that the state's investment in dual credit programs benefits students. The organization's [playbook](#) for policymakers identifies several focus areas for states to ensure students participate in high-quality programs that lead to college credit while in high school, including: (1) program quality, (2) value for financial investments, (3) equity and access, and (4) transparency.

In many ways, the AP story is the gold standard for ensuring programs are rigorous, can be evaluated, and ensure opportunity for students. It would be advantageous to Texas students to ensure that the state sets goals for increasing AP participation alongside its goal setting for dual credit programs.

Recommendation #2: Ensure Universal Support for All College Credit in High School Programs Including AP

Since 2006, the state has focused on ensuring all students have access to college credit in high school courses with the passage and implementation of the College Credit Program.⁵ Requiring school districts to implement programs in which students could earn at least 12 semester credit hours of college credit while in high school has been a game-changer for students across the state.

The recent passage of HB 1638 in 2017 will ensure that more students have meaningful opportunities at earning college credit while in high school with its requirements to evaluate dual

⁴ Additional information on the link between AP and financial well-being can be found in the following research paper available for download at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3622531>: Hsu, J., Hurwitz, M., & Mabel, Z. (2020). *Evaluating the Relationship between Advanced Placement and Financial Well-Being in Adulthood*. Washington, DC: College Board.

⁵ College Credit Program (H.B. 1 in the 79th Legislature).



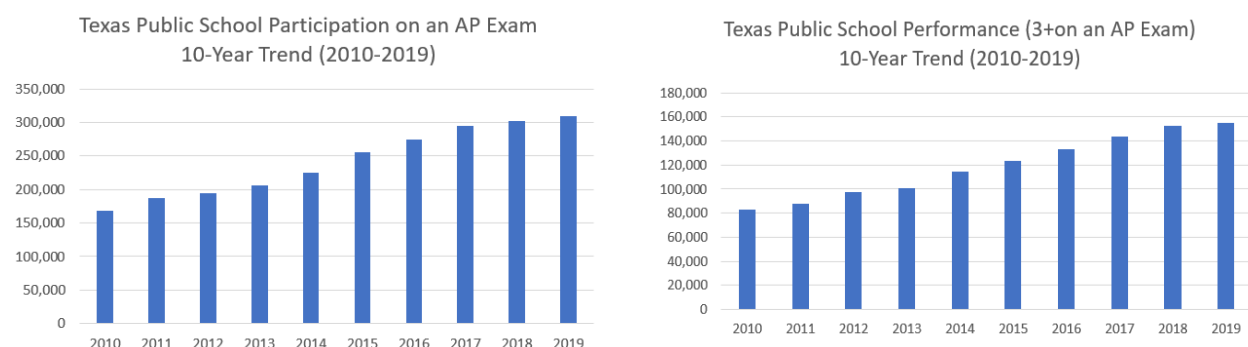
credit programs and develop statewide goals. **The College Board concurs with the intent of the law and recommends that all college credit in high school programs, including AP, are included in goals developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).**

Recommendation #3: Support Continued Funding for the Texas AP Incentive Program

The College Board encourages the Committee to highlight and augment support for initiatives that develop, sustain, and amplify efforts to encourage more students in the state to earn college credit through AP coursework.

The Texas AP Incentive Program, established in 1999, has a long-standing record of delivering success—especially for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged populations. A key part of that success is a result of Texas’ continued commitment to funding a portion of AP Exam fees for low-income students. This best practice ensures students face no financial barrier to participating in exams that lead to college credit. For the May 2020 administration, the AP Incentive Program covered \$30 per AP Exam for low-income students. The investment in AP, much like the dual credit programs for which the TEA and THECB are developing goals, plays a critical role in the state’s college readiness, completion, and affordability agenda, especially considering students who take AP Exams are more likely to enroll in college, stay in college, do well in their classes, and graduate in four years.

In the last 10 years, the public-school participation in AP Exams in Texas has increased from 168,450 examinees in 2010 to 309,274 in 2019—a growth of 84%. AP Exam performance, which means the number of students scoring a “3” or higher, has also increased in the last 10 years from 82,599 exams in 2010 to 154,913 a growth of 88%.



Texas’ AP Credit Policy Ensures Strong ROI. In 2015, Texas passed the law to ensure public universities award credit for scores of 3, 4 and 5. This law resulted in 240 new or improved AP credit policies at Texas’s four-year public campuses. This law is a critical strategy in the state’s college affordability and completion agendas since it ensures students can claim the college credit they earn from AP Exam performance in high school. The state benefits financially when students succeed in AP Exams.

- 1. Taxpayer Savings:** AP Cohort Data in Texas, which looks at student’s entire experience with AP—including all AP Exams taken by members of the class of 2019 through their time in high school, demonstrates **that without the Texas AP Incentive Program, Texas appropriators would need to potentially allocate over \$24 million more per year in its higher education funding formula.**

The table below shows the number of AP Exams with scores of 3 or higher achieved by Texas students in the high school class of 2017 through the high school class of 2019 who enrolled in Texas public higher education institutions. About 198,000 of the 2019 high school graduating

seniors—57% of the class—took at least one AP Exam in high school. The analysis demonstrates that success in AP coursework potentially saved Texas taxpayers over \$47 million over the last two years. **This is more than double the amount appropriated to the Texas AP Incentive Program.**

		Total AP scores of 3 or higher	State funding per credit/contact hour	Potential savings in state funding (rounded to the nearest \$1,000)
2019	TOTAL	164,198		\$24,643,000
	Public four-year	142,163	\$57.40	\$24,480,000
	Public two-year	22,035	\$2.46	\$163,000
2018	TOTAL	153,602		\$22,710,000
	Public four-year	130,937	\$57.39	\$22,543,000
	Public two-year	22,665	\$2.46	\$167,000
2017	TOTAL	144,794		\$21,468,000
	Public four-year	123,790	\$57.39	\$21,313,000
	Public two-year	21,004	\$2.46	\$155,000

Based on the merged College Board and National Student Clearinghouse data for the 2017 through 2019 high school graduating cohorts and assuming each qualifying AP Exam is equal to 3 college credit hours. State funding per credit/contact hour is from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

2. Tuition Savings: 2019 AP data shows that public and private high school students took a total of 292,337 AP Exams that resulted in scores of 3, 4, or 5.

- Based on the potential to earn at least 3 college credit hours for each AP Exam score of 3 or higher, this represents an estimate of 877,011 college credit hours.
- At an average rate of \$348.95⁶ per credit hour, the total potential cost savings for Texas students and families was \$306,032,988.45.

Recommendation #4: Support AP Course Expansion AP Potential⁷ Data Supports Equity Agenda

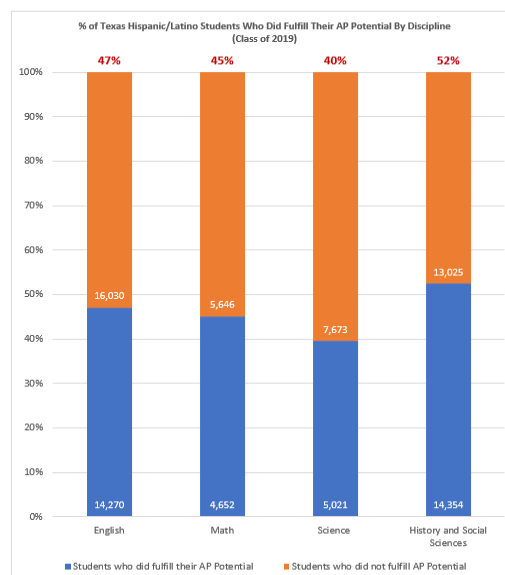
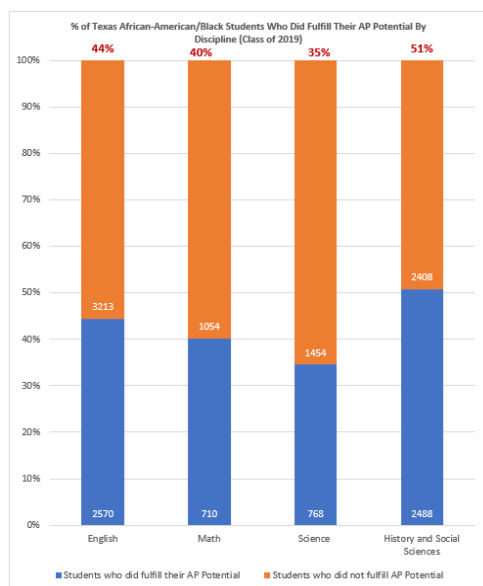
This is a free tool that helps school leaders increase access to AP using assessments score data to identify students with the potential to succeed in AP. College Board data show that hundreds of thousands of high school students nationwide have the potential to succeed in AP but do not take any matched AP course. Bridging this gap is crucial to supporting student access to college. AP Potential includes race/ethnicity data that can help schools, districts, and states support access to college for all students—including African American, Latino, and Native American students—who are less likely than their white and Asian peers to be enrolled in AP classes for which they have shown potential. **We encourage the state to provide robust funding for AP course expansion to ensure that access to rigorous AP opportunities is available for traditionally underserved and underrepresented groups.**

Data from the graduating class of 2019⁸ demonstrates that 38%, or 38,209 Texas public school students, who were identified with AP Potential did not fulfill that potential. When harnessed, a tool like AP Potential helps the state, districts, and schools tackle persistent inequities in access to courses that lead to college credit while in high school. At the local level, this data can help amplify efforts by administrators and educators to build sustainable pipelines.

⁶ These estimates are based on Table 5 of the 2019 College Board report, *Trends in College Pricing*. This report indicates that the average in-state tuition and fees at Texas public four-year colleges was \$10,468 per year in 2019-20 or \$348.95 per credit, assuming 30 credits are taken by a full-time student. These estimates also assume that all the 292,337 AP Exams with scores of 3 or higher taken in Texas were applied toward college credit.

⁷ AP Potential is a free, Web-based tool that allows schools to generate rosters of students who are likely to score a 3 or higher on a given AP Exam based on their performance on an SAT Suite of Assessments exam. It is rooted in a long line of research showing that PSAT/NMSQT® scores, and by extension SAT scores, predict performance on AP Exams – often with more accuracy than other traditionally used methods.

⁸ This is based on cohort data for the class of 2019 which looks at student's entire experience with AP while in high school.



New Online AP Instructional Supports. AP Classroom is a free, online platform that AP teachers use to provide students with practice and feedback on every topic and skill that's tested on an AP Exam. These resources support multiple learning environments—in-person, hybrid/blended, and online.

During the 2019-20 school year, 9,000 AP teachers in Texas used AP Classroom to gain greater insight into their students' strengths and weaknesses. To ensure that all students had access to AP lessons, regardless of whether a school's instruction moved online in the spring 2020, the AP program worked with AP teachers to deliver, free live lessons on YouTube. Texas AP students, teachers, and parents viewed more than 360,000 hours of instruction led by expert AP teachers via YouTube.

- 60%—or 265,000—of Texas AP students completed over 35 million practice questions.
- The average student completed 84 practice questions.
- A majority of AP students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds used AP Classroom, including students from groups traditionally underrepresented in AP:
 - 20,000 Black/African American students (59%)
 - 113,000 Hispanic/Latinx students (55%)
 - 1,500 American Indian/Alaska Native students (56%)
- The majority of AP students in the state's rural schools (54%), urban schools (59%), and suburban schools (64%) also used AP Classroom.

Ensuring that educators are supported and resources are available to augment student learning will be key over the next couple of years as students aim to recoup learning losses due to COVID-19.

In closing, the College Board welcomes the opportunity to continue to work with Texas to highlight best practices for programs that lead to college credit while in high school. We trust that these best practices will be incorporated into efforts by the state to ensure that the courses students take reflect authentic, college-level rigor.